DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 364 807 CG 025 130

TITLE	What about Me? An Actions for Health Book. Contemporary Health Series.
INSTITUTION	ETR Associates, Santa Cruz, CA.
PUB DATE	94
NOTE	26p.; For other "Actions for Health" books see CG 025 129-134.
AVAILABLE FROM	ETR Associates, P.O. Box 1830, Santa Cruz, CA 95061-1830.
PUB TYPE	Guides - General (050)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Change; *Children; *Coping; Elementary Secondary Education; *Family Life; *Family Structure; Fiction; *Remarriage

ABSTRACT

This document contains a short fictional story about a young boy who is angry when his mother decides to remarry. The theme of the story is handling family changes. Readers discover how the boy learns that a bigger family, with a stepfather and new stepsiblings, can be fun. (NB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
A. Yanowitz
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 364 807

An *Actions for Health* Book

What About Me?

2

ETR ASSOCIATES

CG025130

CONTEMPORARY HEALTH SERIES

What About Me?

An *Actions for Health* Book

by ETR Associates

ETR ASSOCIATES
Santa Cruz, California
1994

ETR Associates (Education, Training and Research) is a nonprofit organization committed to fostering the health, well-being and cultural diversity of individuals, families, schools and communities. The publishing program of ETR Associates provides books and materials that empower young people and adults with the skills to make positive health choices. We invite health professionals to learn more about our high-quality publishing, training and research programs by contacting us at P.O. Box 1830, Santa Cruz, CA 95061-1830, 1-800-321-4407.

© 1994 by ETR Associates. All rights reserved.

Published by ETR Associates
Printed in the United States of America
Illustrated by Nina Paley
Design by Ann Smiley

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

The Thing About Mornings 2

The Big Announcement 6

Things Will Be Different 12

A Special Birthday 16

Feelings About Families 20

The Thing About Mornings

Matt was pretty happy with his life. He was one of the best players on his Little League baseball team. He also played the trumpet in the school band. He was even doing OK in school. His mom had been very pleased with his last report card. Math was tough, but he got a B this time!

Matt's mom and dad had been divorced about three years. Matt lived with his mom, but he visited his dad often. The first year his dad was gone had been really hard. Matt had felt very sad. He still missed seeing his dad in the mornings before school.

Matt had a new clock radio to wake him up in the morning. But sometimes he wished his dad were still around to do the job. "It's funny," Matt thought, "I hated to get up in the mornings. Why do I miss Dad in the mornings now?"

Matt remembered the way his dad used to wake him to get ready for school. Matt's dad was always cheerful in the morning. First, he'd poke his head into Matt's bedroom with a big smile on his face. Sometimes he'd be whistling a silly tune.

Matt would groan and pull the covers over his head. But his dad would flash the overhead light a couple of times. Then he would say something stupid like "Rise and shine" or "Daylight is burning."

"No, not yet!" Matt would say. "Give me three more minutes, just three more minutes!"

But his dad would pull the pillow out from under Matt's head. Matt's head would go thump! Then his dad would fling off the covers. "I hated that," Matt thought. "Why do I miss it?"

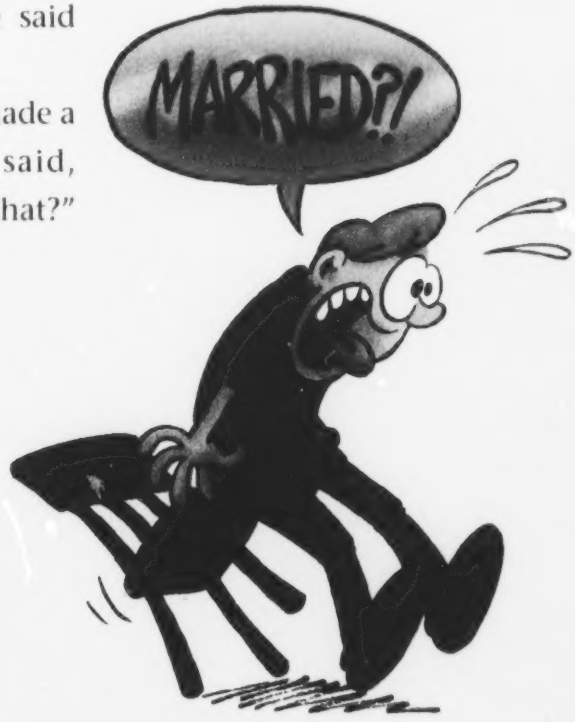
The Big Announcement

One morning, Matt's mom said, "You and I need to talk." Matt wondered if he was in trouble. He tried to remember if he had forgotten to do any of his work. He had taken out the trash, done the recycling, made his bed . . . .

But his mom didn't want to talk to him about something he had done.

"Sit down," Mom said. Then she took a deep breath. "You know that I have been seeing Robert a lot," she said slowly.

Matt made a face and said, "Yeah, so what?"



Mom sort of smiled. "We want to get married," she said.

Matt jumped out of his chair. "MARRIED!" he yelled. "What about me?"

"What do you mean?" Mom asked. "We will still be together. We'll just have a bigger family."

"I don't want a bigger family," Matt said. "I like it the way it is now. I've just gotten used to only seeing my dad on the weekends. Now you want me to get used to seeing another guy who **isn't even my father**? He'll be here **all** the time. And what about his kids? Do I have to put up with them, too?"

Matt's mom was upset. "I didn't think you would be so negative," she said. "I thought you liked Robert. We can talk about this again tonight. You need to get to school now."

Matt still looked glum when he got to school.

"What's up?" his friend Jesse asked.

"The worst thing in the world has happened," Matt said.

"You mean you didn't make the all-star team?" Jesse asked.

"It's not that," Matt said. "It's worse than that."

Jesse gave Matt a funny look. Baseball was really important to Matt.

"What could be worse than that?" he asked.
"My mom's getting married," Matt said.
"Oh," said Jesse, "so what's the big deal?"

"Don't you get it?" Matt said. "Now I'll have to have another dad. I'm happy with the dad I have! I don't want another one. Plus, this guy has kids. Now I'll have a big sister **and** a little brother."

Now Jesse looked worried, too. "Uh oh," he said. He slowly shook his head.

"Uh oh, what?!" Matt asked. "C'mon, Jesse, tell me!"

"Well, the little brother might be OK," Jesse said. "But a big sister...." He shook his head again. Jesse had one of each, so he knew.

"What about a big sister?" Matt asked.

"Big sisters never let you into the bathroom," Jesse said. "They hog the phone. They bring around guys that you have to be nice to. At least you can make a little brother wait on you."

It was even worse than Matt thought!

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Things Will Be Different

When Matt's mom got home from work that night, they talked for a long time. Matt told her about the things he was afraid of.

"I'm afraid I won't get to see my dad," he said. "I'm afraid you and I won't get to spend as much time together. I don't think I'll like living in a bigger family. Jesse says big sisters are awful."

"I understand," Mom said. "It's normal for you to feel that way. Having a new family will change some things. But it won't change how often you get to see your dad. And I promise to take time to be with you."

"It will be a big change for you to have a brother and a sister," she added. "You'll probably need time to get used to each other. But you can always talk to me about your feelings. And I'll share my feelings with you, too. To start with, I really love Robert. I want to marry him very much."

"I know," Matt said. "He's OK. But I don't even know his kids."

Matt felt a little better after the talk with his mom. And he was glad she was happy. But he couldn't help thinking, What about me? How can this change be good for me?

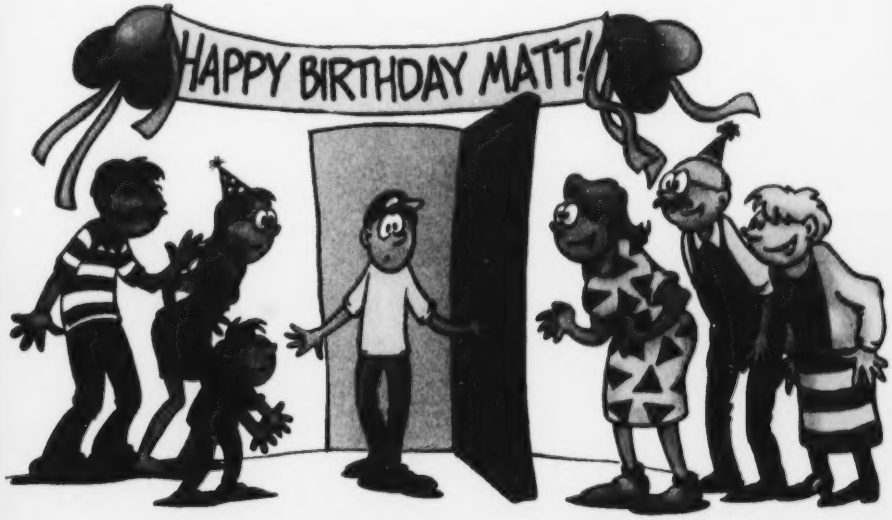
During the next week, things stayed pretty much the same, except that Robert was around a little more often.

One evening, Robert's kids came over. Kevin was seven. He was pretty nice to have around. He looked up to Matt. And he knew a lot about baseball for a little kid. Matt helped him organize his baseball cards.

And Matt wasn't sure he agreed with Jesse about big sisters. Sandra was thirteen, but she was OK. She could hit a baseball at least as far as Jesse could. And with three kids, they could play three-flies-up.

A Special Birthday

That Saturday was Matt's birthday. In the morning he went to his dad's house. His dad took him to a baseball game. They had a great time. Matt still wished sometimes that his mom and dad would get back together. But he knew that wasn't going to happen.



When Matt got home from his dad's house, his mom had a surprise birthday dinner waiting for him. Matt's grandparents were there. So were Robert and his two kids.

"Surprise! Happy Birthday!" they all yelled when Matt walked into the house.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

After dinner, his mom and Sandra brought out a big cake with lots of frosting and eleven candles on it.

"Sandra baked the cake for you," Mom said, "and Robert helped her decorate it."

"I helped, too," Kevin said. "I put the candles on it."

"You did a great job," Matt said. Then he blew out the candles while everybody sang "Happy Birthday." It sounded a lot better than when just his mom sang.

"Now, it's time to open your gifts," Mom said. She brought a big stack of packages out of the closet. There was something from everybody—Grandma and Grandpa, Mom, Robert, Sandra. Even Kevin had made a card and stuck two of his favorite baseball cards in it.

"Maybe I'll like having a bigger family, after all," Matt thought.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU.....

Feelings About Families

When Matt went to bed that night, his mom came in to talk. "How did you like the party?" she asked. "Are you feeling any better about having a bigger family now?"

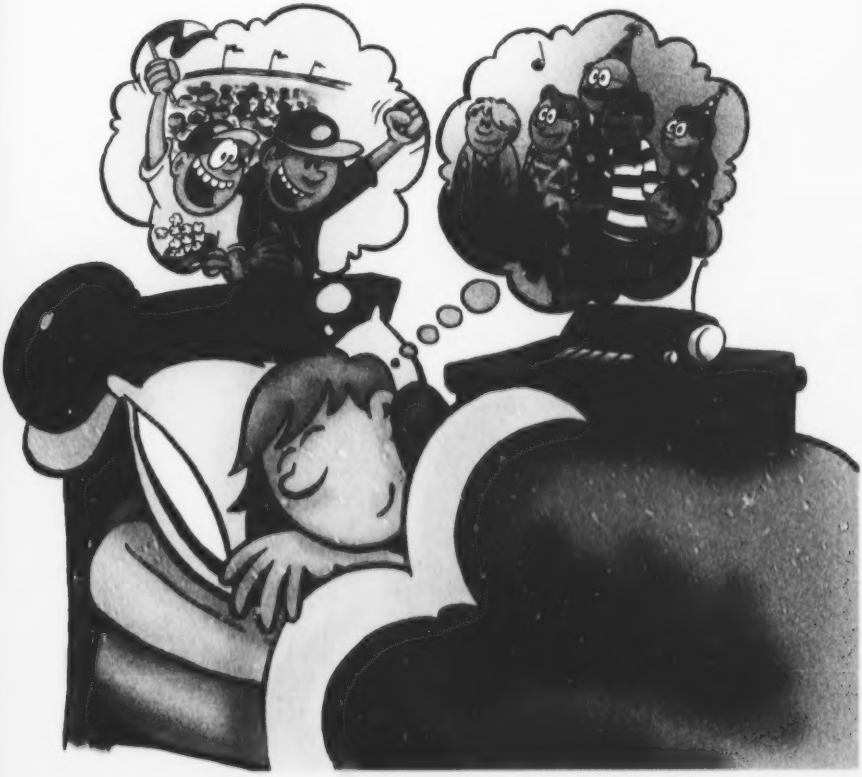
"The party was fun," Matt said. "I guess Sandra and Kevin might be OK to have around. But I don't have to start calling Robert 'Dad,' do I?"

"No, of course not," Mom said. "Robert's not going to take the place of your dad. You'll still see your dad as often as ever."

Matt and his mom talked for a long time. They agreed that there were both good and not-so-good things about a new family. Then Matt's mom hugged him and said good night.

Matt set his clock radio. Then he turned off the light.

A bigger family was going to be OK. It might even be fun. "I'll still miss Dad in the mornings," Matt thought. But next weekend would come quickly, and during the week he and Sandra could show Kevin how to slide into home.



MARRIED?!?!

This book is about handling family changes. Matt is angry when his mother decides to remarry. He doesn't want another dad or a new sister and brother. See how Matt learns that a bigger family can mean more room for fun!

ETR Associates
Santa Cruz, California

BEST COPY AVAILABLE